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ROTUNDA

Fall 1970
Volume 3, Number 4

HEADHUNTERS
OF NEW GUINEA

HOT WHEELS
IN SHANG CHINA

ROTUNDA

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Volume 3, Number 4
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The cover: Ceremonial yam mask from New Guinea

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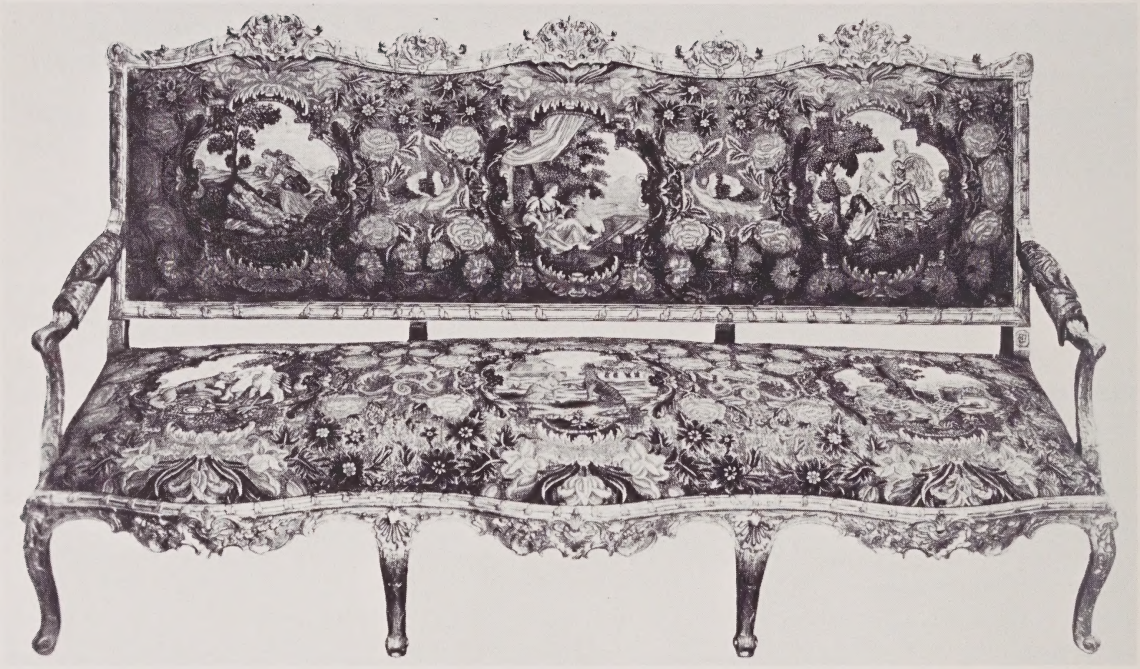
Spotlight with the Editor

Past, present and future at the ROM



BAROQUE FOR ALL

Within the next few weeks, the ROM puts on permanent display its most widely publicized acquisitions in recent years. When the room setting opens in the Baroque Gallery, its stars will be two armchairs and a settee, all of the Louis XIV period, the fabled age of the "Sun King". Frames of the furniture are richly carved and gilded and each piece still has its original upholstery, done in intricate petit point embroidery and illustrating mythological and fabled subjects. The museums of France own very few samples of Louis XIV furniture and the export of these extraordinary royal household pieces, dated about 1710, was permitted only after ROM appeals that reached the diplomatic level.

The Baroque setting also will display two early 18th century leather wall coverings, one measuring 10 by 18 feet, the other 10 by nine. Of Flemish origin, these leather hangings are excellent examples of early Chinoiserie decorative style.

The setting will be completed with 18th century flooring, a pair of torchères (flower stands) of the 1700s, and a painting by the late 17th century Dutch artist, Saftleven, as well as the painting by Gaulli mentioned in *Rotunda,* Summer 1969.

The Baroque Room is a tribute to the efforts of a determined group of volunteer women and of Heri Hickl-Szabo, Curator of the European Department. The women raised money for the purchases by staging the Museum's glittering Baroque Ball last year. Mr. Hickl-Szabo, with his thorough knowledge of Europe, its markets and its dealers, was able to spend the funds to spectacular effect.

THATCHED ROOFS

The atmosphere of the tropics—jungle, blue sky, straw matting, rocky shores—fills Exhibition Hall Nov. 3 to Jan. 10. The elaborate setting is to give perspective to *New Guinea: Big Man Island,* a major exhibition of the tools, pottery, weapons, masks and other artifacts of the inhabitants of the world's second largest island. Most of the objects are drawn from the splendid Austin collection of New Guinea material acquired by the ROM a year ago and now publicly displayed for the first time. The exhibition is arranged according to the major settlement areas of New Guinea and even includes a Sepik River village of thatched huts. It was organized by Dr. E. S. Rogers, Curator of the Ethnology Department. John Anthony, head of the Display Department, designed the show and it isn't hard to imagine a headhunting party lurking in the jungle shadows. Read Dr. Rogers' article on New Guinea elsewhere in this issue.

CHINESE TEMPLE

In the third floor Far Eastern Galleries, one area recently has been completed as a Chinese temple setting of the 19th century. Dominated by the 12-foot tall bronze statue of Buddha, it shows how such a temple might be furnished in a small community where worship was not confined to one religion. The temple combines elements of Buddhism, Confucianism, Taoism and even more primitive cults. Perched on the top of the temple walls are some spectacular 14th to 18th century Chinese ceramic roof ornaments. And around the gallery walls are hung religious paintings of China and Tibet, dating

from the 14th to the 19th centuries. H-Y Shih, Curator of the Far Eastern Department, was responsible for the temple setting with the design assistance of Mr. Anthony.

IN MEMORIAM

Moffatt St. Andrew Woodside, for many years a senior administrator of the University of Toronto and a member of the ROM Board of Trustees, died in September. He was 64. A graduate of the U. of T. and a Rhodes Scholar, Dr. Woodside joined the University's teaching staff in 1931. He served as Registrar of Victoria College, Dean of the University's Faculty of Arts and for the 1957-58 academic year was the University's acting President. Then he became principal of University College and at his death he held the posts of Vice-President and Provost of the University of Toronto. Dr. Woodside's calm, scholarly understanding and his gifts as an administrator will be sadly missed by his fellow Trustees and by the Museum staff.

NEW GUINEA: BIG MAN ISLAND

E. S. Rogers

Curator, Ethnology Department

Carved figures from the Maprik area, each over three feet tall. Representation of a sacred python encircles the female figure

Give a man freedom from the pressures of finding food, shelter and clothing and he will find other ways of amusing himself. Kings and nobles long delighted in ceremony and made war an art that, until recently, usually avoided mass slaughter.

In the present generation, a substantial part of the western world has discovered that it has time on its hands, time that sometimes seems a burden. To ease this burden a whole "leisure time" industry has grown up.

But outside the western tradition, many peoples long have enjoyed the "easy life" —among them the inhabitants of the world's second largest island, New Guinea. Until western influences made them aware of foreign goods, the Melanesians and Papuans of New Guinea lived quite comfortably by horticulture. Blessed by a tropical environment, their food supply usually was sufficient to allow them to engage in a variety of activities not directly related to survival. To occupy their spare time, they developed ceremony and ritual to a high art that involved trade, war and many crafts.

In the next several pages there is a brief description of the main features of such life in New Guinea. There should be no surprise at obvious comparisons with various facets of "western civilization."

This article also is a slight introduction for the major exhibition, "New Guinea: Big Man Island," at the ROM November 3 to January 5. The Museum is fortunate in having a large and representative collection

of materials made by the peoples of New Guinea; materials that because they are perishable are becoming increasingly rare as European influences alter the traditional way of life.

The backbone of the ROM collection is material assembled by Peter Austin, an Australian geologist who worked in New Guinea. Mr. Norman Elder persuaded Mr. Austin to send his collection to Toronto where it recently was acquired by the ROM through the enthusiastic interest of Peter C. Swann, the Director. The Austin material is from the northern regions of New Guinea, an area not previously represented in the Museum collections which had been assembled around the turn of the century from the southern part of the island.

Keep the exhibition in mind and now consider the people of New Guinea. They were skilful gardeners and generally raised abundant crops of yams, sweet potatoes and taro, although taro cannot be stored for future use. It must be eaten immediately. Root crops were not the only means of livelihood. Tree crops —sago, coconut and pandanus—played an important part in the diet of some groups. In coastal areas and along such major rivers as the Sepik, fishing added protein to the diet. Dugong and turtles also were taken wherever possible. Although hunting was common throughout the area, it was more of a sport than anything else. Wallaby, cassowary and wild pig, the only large game inhabiting the area, were not in sufficient quantity to more than augment the food supply on occasion.

Pigs were extremely important and all the peoples of New Guinea possessed domestic swine. Pigs were not however raised primarily as a source of food but rather as a basis for prestige through feasts and ceremonial exchanges. The tusks of boars were used as ornaments which bestowed prestige upon the owner and which were a part of extensive ceremonial trading cycles that were a major

Shell inlays and boars' tusks adorn a carved and painted mask

theme in the life of the people of New Guinea.

Like food, other material needs were relatively easy to satisfy. Life in a tropical environment (except at higher elevations) required only minimal clothing. The men wore little more than a penis sheath and the women a grass skirt. Housing was needed not for warmth but for protection from heavy rains and tropical sun. Housing materials were readily available and easily fashioned to the needs of the structure, even one of elaborate construction. Again little time need be spent in house building during the course of any one year. The means of transportation also required little time to fashion. In the coastal areas dugout canoes, sometimes elaborately rigged, were the chief means of travel. In some areas these were propelled by sails. Inland trails were adequate because the amount of goods moved overland was limited. The netted bags of the women were the chief device for transporting everything from firewood to babies. Furthermore, a sedentary people living in villages and dependent upon the growing of crops felt only a limited need to move from one locality to another. Accordingly, material possessions were not numerous except those made for ritual purposes and ceremonial exchange. It is these that give the colour and glamour to the societies of New Guinea and it was possible to spend considerable time each year on their maintenance and manufacture.

The leisure time made available through the particular subsistence pattern of the inhabitants of New Guinea was spent in a variety of ways. Extensive trade was carried on with near and distant villages both for utilitarian purposes and in a ceremonial manner, to gain social position within one's group. Although Wall Street and Bay Street were unknown to the inhabitants of New Guinea, they operated in a manner that would be most congenial to those in the world of high finance. In fact, Bay Street might be able

Carved and painted shield adorned with tassels. Such shields are usually as tall as a man

to learn a thing or two from the peoples of New Guinea. Warfare too was important, not for territorial gain or the spoils of territorial conquest, but as a principle of honour and a necessity for the proper performance of certain rituals. Finally, certain ceremonial activities involved the people for lengthy periods of time each year. These ceremonies were essential to maintain harmony with the world about them and with other human beings. These three activities took much of the leisure time made available through a major productive economy, a pattern typical of western society.

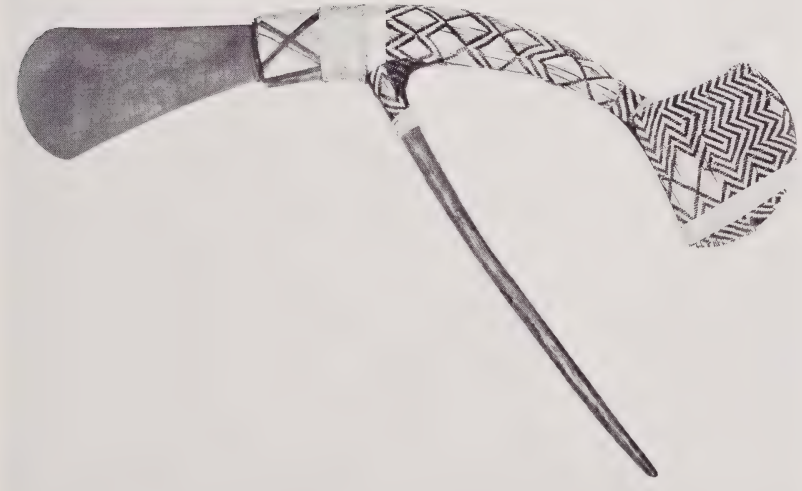
In many ways, the peoples of New Guinea exemplified social climbers. They were such individualists that rarely was there any tribal or more complex form of political structure. Their society was village-based. It has been estimated that there were as many as 20,000 villages in New Guinea, each village being to all intents and purposes autonomous and not subject to the control of any outside group. Villages tended to be small, usually numbering only a few hundred inhabitants. In some parts of the highlands, even villages were non-existent and the people were scattered in small family homesteads, each located in the neighbourhood of its gardens.

Incised decoration on a clay pot

Despite this spirit of individualism clan systems did occur by which a person was assigned a place in society through birth. These units were important in ceremonial endeavours and warfare. Nevertheless, it was possible to achieve prominence outside the clan organization through trade, warfare and/or ceremonial expertise. In this way individual males were able to rise to prominent positions within the society, to become "big men." Such individuals were equals and rivals, each attempting to hold and dominate a following, usually of clansmen related to them through kinship and bound by custom to aid them. Women played no part in this status-seeking game.

Although the search for high social position based on trade, warfare and ceremony typified the societies of New Guinea, it is possible to roughly define a number of rather distinctive regions. Perhaps the most notable of these are the Highlands, Asmat, Papuan Gulf, Sepik and Massim. These distinctions are based in part on the goods manufactured in each region. In spite of extensive trade, there was sufficient isolation to allow the inhabitants to evolve their own peculiarities. Moreover, resources were often confined to a

Beheading knife of bamboo



Highland axe used in ceremonial trading

Carved suspension hook, used in the Sepik River area to hang up net bags in the men's house

particular area. New Guinea, although within the tropical world, is a land of contrast, from the coastal areas of humid, tropical jungle to mountains whose tops were covered with snow throughout the year.

As mentioned, there were three ways in which a man might elevate his social position—through trade, warfare or ceremonial activities. Trade among the peoples of New Guinea was of major concern. For many, trade was an obsession, engaged in for the pure joy of the transactions. Trade was also important in providing the foundation for many of the major ceremonies, especially among the peoples of the Highlands. Trade was also conducted for practical purposes. Goods—axes, sago, yams, armshells, wooden carvings, salt, oil, pots, pigs and boars' tusks, dogs and dogs' teeth—travelled widely within each of the regions named above and to a certain extent between them. In fact, there was hardly an item produced by the peoples of New Guinea that was not subject to trade.

Trade often involved natural products. Perhaps the most notable example is that of the *Hiri,* a large trading expedition undertaken by the people of the Port Moresby region. Each year large fleets of *lakatoi*—several dugout canoes joined together—left Port Moresby for the head of the Papuan Gulf. The region of Port Moresby is quite arid and food was not abundant. But the inhabitants at the head of the Papuan Gulf produced a surplus of sago which the peoples from Port Moresby could use. The latter were proficient pottery makers, and each year tons of sago were transported to the Port Moresby region in exchange for thousands of pots. Other goods were also exchanged, some of which were not utilitarian but rather of a ceremonial nature and were used later in various rituals.

Likewise, in the Massim Region, stone for axeheads was acquired in one of the islands and circulated widely throughout the rest of the area where such stone was unavailable. In addition, certain villages in particular islands were noted for their craftmanship and their goods were sought over a wide area

because of their quality. Wooden lime spatulas, axe handles and wooden figures are examples of such goods. The northeast coast of New Guinea was another centre of extensive trade connections in which utilitarian goods such as food played a part in the exchange complex.

Although trade for utilitarian goods occurred frequently in New Guinea, it was usually connected with ceremonial exchange, an aspect of much more significance to the participants. Often before trade in utilitarian goods could take place, ceremonial exchanges between recognized trading partners had to occur. These transactions brought prestige to the individuals involved and their supporters. A classic example of ceremonial exchange was the *kula* ring of the Massim area which involved the circulation, in a counterclockwise direction, of specially prepared armbands made of shell throughout the islands. In return for these armbands, shell necklaces passed in a clockwise direction through the islands. These were ceremonial items in the sense that they were family heirlooms and prized possessions when once received. However, it was not permissible to amass them as a sign of wealth as would be the case in western society. Rather they must pass on within the circle and should theoretically not be taken out of the circuit. Prestige was acquired not through ownership as such, but rather through the fact that one, at a particular time, possessed one of these items. Each individual knew his place in the system. Once having acquired an object, he was expected to pass it on in return for an object of comparable wealth to his designated trading partner. In the Highlands there was a similar system of ceremonial exchanges with designated partners, in which pigs played a prominent role. Once the population of pigs reached sufficient size, a series of transactions was undertaken with neighbouring groups who then passed them on to their neighbours and so on to the end of the line. Once the end was reached, a feast would be held at which the pigs were killed and cooked. The meat would then be distributed back along the line over which the pigs had been received.

Elaborately decorated ceremonial flute; the base is a bamboo tube

Warfare also could enable an individual to gain social status within his community, although warfare at times could be essential to certain religious rites. Among the Asmat, enemy heads must be taken to properly initiate young males into adulthood. Accordingly, headhunting was a prime concern to people such as the Asmat, although it was practised in many parts of New Guinea. Cannibalism, often thought to be characteristic of New Guinea, was practised by few people.

Warfare might consist of surprise attacks, or a formal battle on designated grounds. Equipment consisted of shields, bows and arrows, clubs, and spears. A special knife might be used to sever a slain enemy's head and there was a special contrivance for carrying it. Warfare was an essential part of the culture of the people and often an individual who had not taken a head was considered a "nobody." It was therefore important for social advancement, but was regularized and ritualized to such a degree that casualties were limited. Usually in the formalized battles of the Highlands people, once a few injuries or deaths had been sustained, a truce was proclaimed.

The hostilities expressed through warfare were balanced by the ceremonial trading activities which required periods of peace. There was a rhythm to the life of the people; at times they were in conflict with one another and at other times several thousand individuals might assemble in peace for the ceremonial exchanges. This balance between warfare and ceremonial exchanges enabled the societies of New Guinea to continue to exist over time. There was no concept of warfare being undertaken solely to secure land and subjugate peoples. The idea of political empires was foreign to the peoples of New Guinea who in general lived in village isolation. But isolation was not absolute since the villages were linked together in an intricate web of trade relations.

A third characteristic feature of the peoples of New Guinea was their emphasis on elaborate rituals. These in general revolved about the men's house to the exclusion of the women. The men's house was an exclusive club and the youth had to be initiated to gain entrance. Often a series of rites was performed over a long period of time before an individual was fully indoctrinated, and then it might be years before he knew the innermost secrets. The members sometimes resided within the men's house and took their meals there. It was there that the ritual paraphernalia of the various cults was stored. Rituals were performed to

Bone dagger—obviously the property of a "big man" on the Sepik

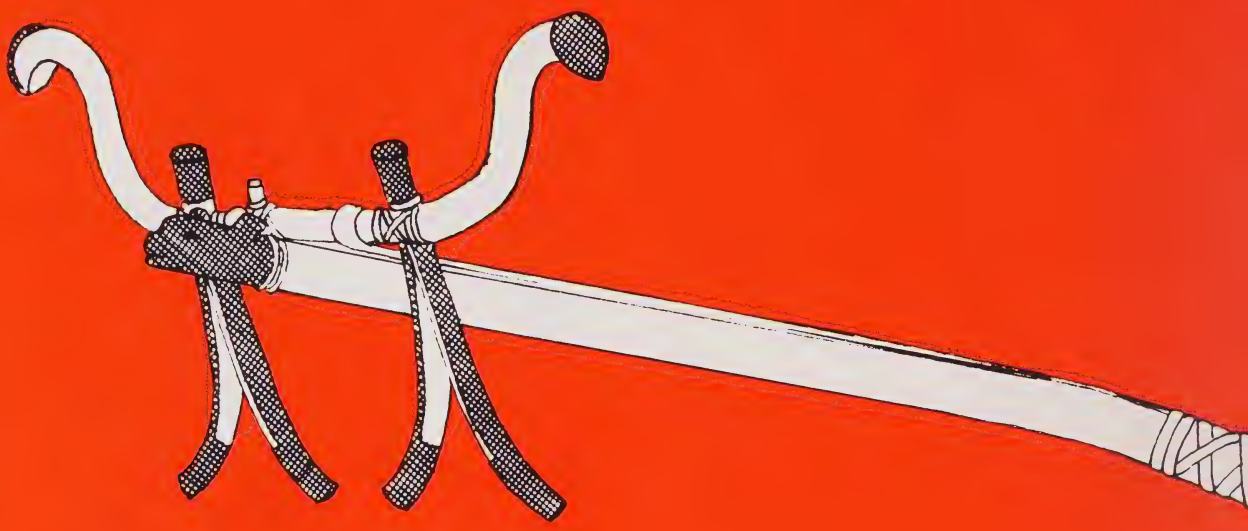
propitiate various spirit beings and to portray their activities within this world. By this means the women were intimidated and held in awe of the world of men and spirits. Certain of the rituals were designed to ensure success in horticulture. An elaborate ritual of this nature, the "yam cult," was conducted by the inhabitants of the region north of the Sepik River. After the harvest the yams were assembled and decorated with wicker masks as part of the appropriate ceremony. These same people had elaborate men's houses, enormous buildings, brightly decorated and housing such ritual equipment as carvings representing males and females and a variety of masks, each distinct for the particular ceremony for which it was employed.

The peoples of New Guinea had a dramatic culture based on horticulture of root crops. It was a culture which excluded women and exalted men. The life of the men revolved about trade, warfare and elaborate ceremonial performances, all of which aided in the elevation of the "big men", who were the dominant and notable figures in the society.

Stick and carved gourd for carrying lime for areca-*nut chewing; the equivalent of a cigarette case*

Edward S. Rogers has had a frantically busy year since the 400 items in the New Guinea collection arrived on his doorstep. He and his staff barely had time to gasp before they plunged into work: studying, cataloguing, and arranging photography. Dr. Rogers prepared the manuscript for a 260-page book with 130 photos and eight colour plates and at the same time tried to supervise plans for the exhibition, *New Guinea: Big Man Island*. But the pace is not new to Dr. Rogers who joined the ROM in 1959. In addition to his responsibilities for the Ethnology collection which contains more than 70,000 items from around the world, he is involved in many activities concerning Canadian Indians.

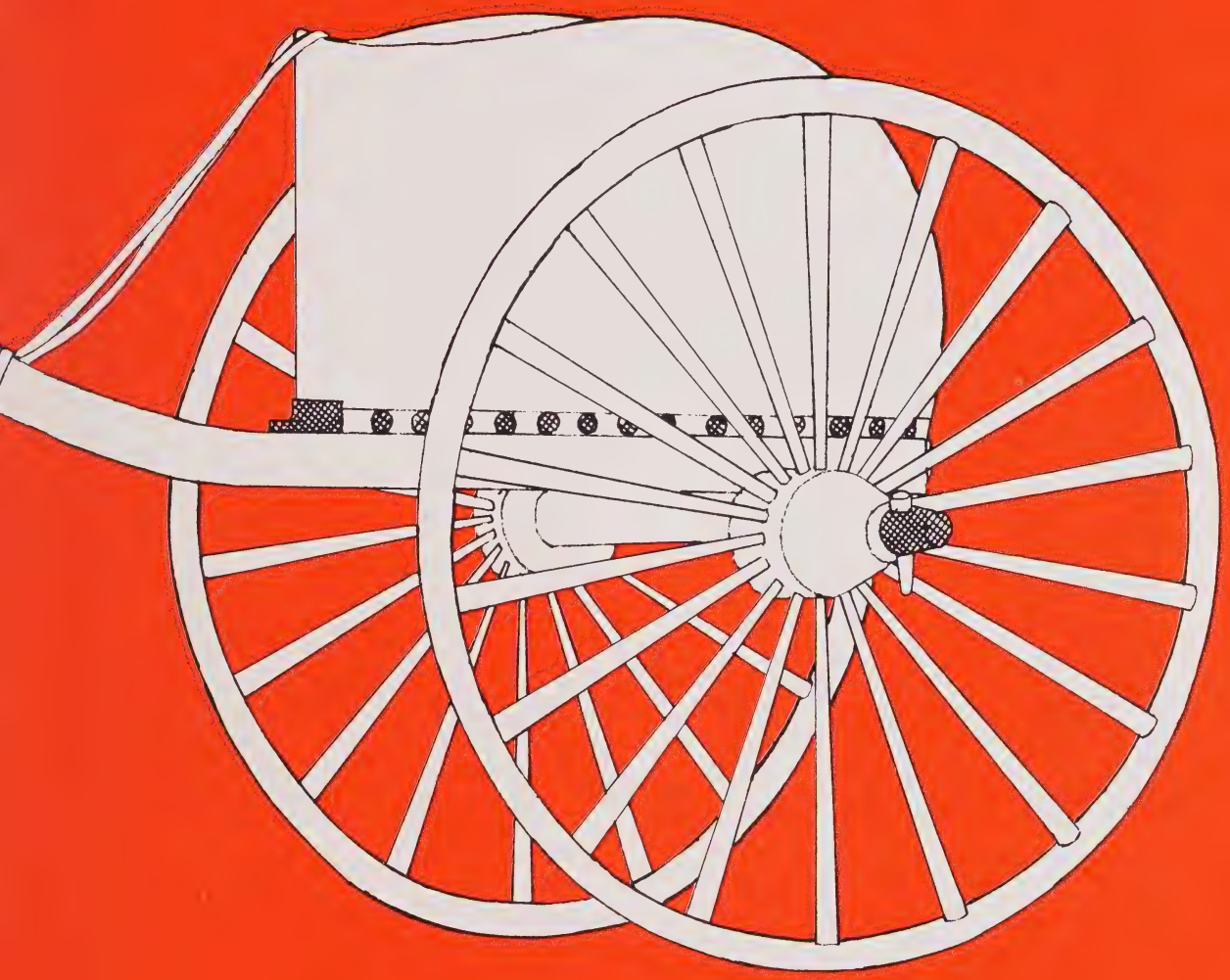
Author's reconstruction of a Shang chariot, showing some of its bronze fittings in position



Ink rubbing of inscription on a Shang Dynasty bronze vessel in the ROM. *The lower part is a pictograph of a chariot, seen from above, showing its spoked wheels, box, pole, yoke, and V-shaped yoke saddles*

WHEELS FOR THE DRAGON

Barbara Stephen,
Associate Curator, Far Eastern Department



Little is certain about Shang Dynasty China, even its dates. Falling as it did in the latter half of the second millennium B.C. and well before the reliable beginning of recorded history, the Shang Dynasty is a temporal frontier, as intriguing to an archaeologist as the far reaches of the solar system are to an astronomer.

Flickering in the uncertain light of our knowledge of that time is a tentative image of an object which in its day was in the forefront of technological development, the chariot. Chariots appeared in China several hundred years before 1000 B.C., when a high Bronze Age culture flourished in northern China. While knowledge of it is growing, we still are uncertain of how this culture developed, or why, and of just how it related to other contemporary cultures in the ancient world. The ROM is unique in the western world in having a great archaeological collection representing the later part of the Shang Dynasty when the Shang people had their capital at An-yang, from approximately 1300 to 1028 B.C. Our material compares in richness and extent with material excavated by China's Academia Sinica from An-yang itself more than 30 years ago, and now in Taiwan.

Handling the objects of the period, many of them still encrusted with the Chinese soil in which they were buried over 3,000 years ago, it is possible to gain a closer understanding of the Shang people and their culture than could be obtained in any other way, except, perhaps, by digging in China.

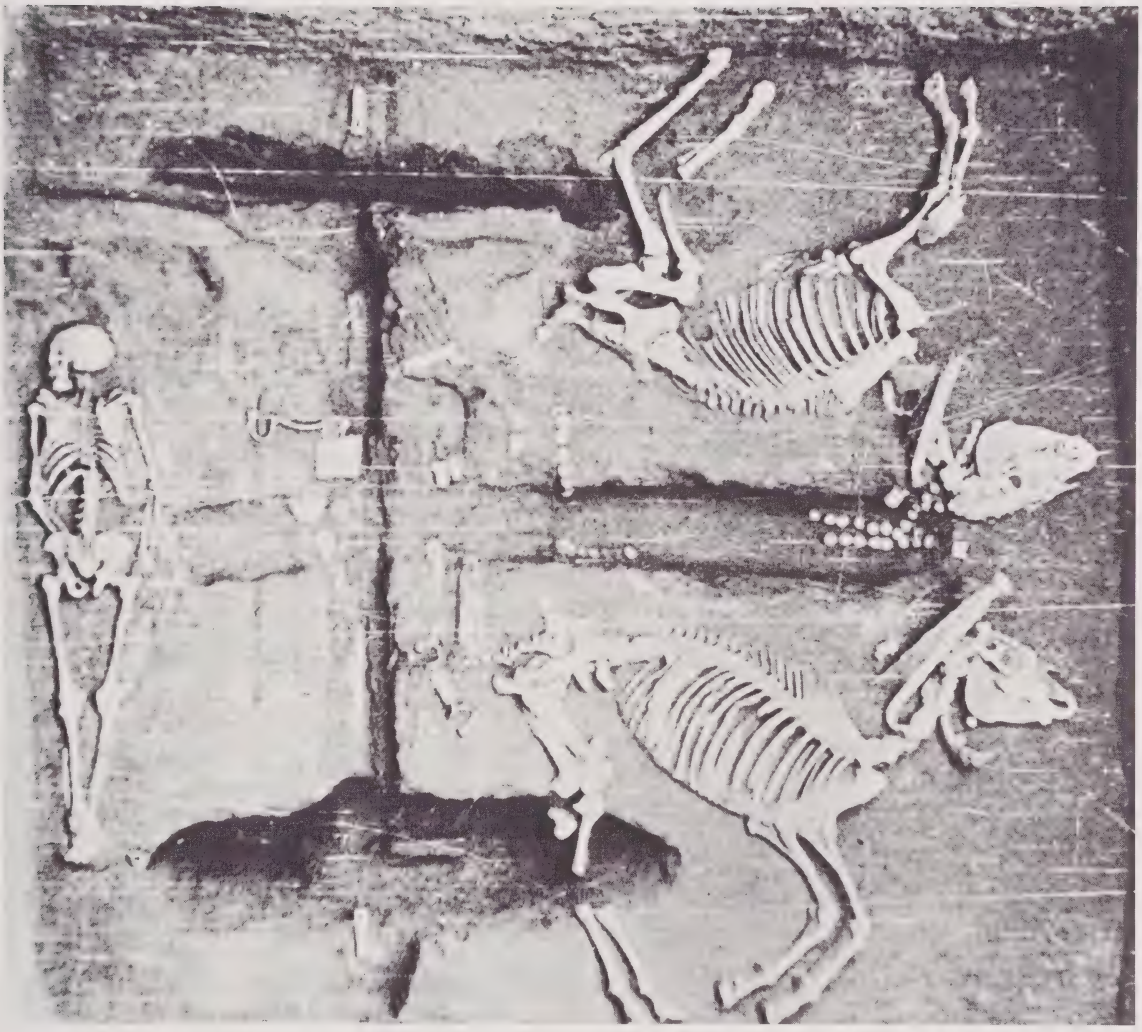
Among the smaller Shang bronzes are a particularly interesting group of fittings that came from chariot burials. Such chariots may well prove to be the most significant finds of the An-yang period, for they could hold the clue to understanding many other features present in Shang culture. Their archaeological importance is unquestionable, and they afford in addition a basis for some really fascinating speculation. For Shang culture moved on wheels, and on very 'hot wheels' indeed.

For several decades most scholars have tended to regard Shang culture as a local phenomenon, evolved in isolation from all but the most tenuous influences from the rest of the Eurasian continent. This case has been argued quite convincingly, and might stand unchallenged almost indefinitely were it not for the chariots. Looking at these vehicles, however, it is impossible to deny that the Shang Chinese used the most sophisticated mode of transportation available in the world at the time. They related to other contemporary transport as a Grand Prix Ferrari does to a horseless carriage.

These chariots appeared not once but in a variety of burials, as well as in unmistakable pictographs recording contemporary events on the Shang oracle bones. To argue isolation in the face of this transport capability is becoming increasingly difficult, especially since it is obvious that in the areas of design, construction and harness the Shang chariot corresponded closely to its most advanced contemporaries.

Despite the conviction of Carl Jung that a wheel sign is one of man's most basic and ancient symbols, it is still not known when or where actual working wheels were first used. They may have developed from rollers used to move heavy objects, they may have evolved from the paraphernalia of cult objects, they may even have been used as toys before more practical applications were found.

It is assumed that the earliest wheels were made of solid planks, like those found at some Mesopotamian sites. Some of these early wheels were apparently attached to massive wooden axles and both turned together to roll the vehicle heavily along. Just how the transition to the spoked wheel was made, or where, is unclear. It seems to have happened at approximately the same time as the horse appeared in harness. Since the horse is considered to have spread from the northern grassy plains of the continent, spoked wheels may first have been used there. Anyone who has worked with wood will realize that the difference between a wheel with four or more spokes fitted into a rim, designed to turn about a fixed axle, and the system described above is prodigious. Some archaeologists feel that the work and skill involved in constructing such a wheel presuppose the availability of metal tools, although this, like so many other theories on the subject, remains to be proven.



Burial of chariot, horses, and charioteer, from Ta-ssu-k'ung-ts'un, An-yang. Position of wheels, axle and pole can be seen from depressions in the earth. Bronze fittings for yoke saddles and harness are in position near the horses' heads

The spoked wheel was on the scene early in the second millennium B.C., and rapidly spread into most of the centres of civilization as an essential part of the chariot. During the third millennium an ancestral form of chariot had been used in Mesopotamia, a solid-wheeled vehicle with a superstructure that might be straddled by the rider.

The true chariot however had two spoked wheels, a yoke to which two horses were connected, a fixed axle, and a pole on the rear part of which rested a box for the riders. These features were common to chariots wherever

they were used, although local decoration might give the vehicles a distinctive character. The boxes might be of wicker, or worked leather, or there might be only a frame with open sides; there might be metal decoration, paint or gilding; the leather might be red, and the wheels bound in leather, bark or metal. The wheels might be as small as some of those in Egypt, about 75 centimetres in diameter, or almost twice that size, as in Shang China. They might have four spokes, as in Mycenae, or 18 as in one Chinese burial at An-yang. Whatever the modifications, the basic design was constant, and we may assume that it was highly efficient for the purposes for which chariots were used.

It has long been thought that chariots were designed mainly for warfare, other tasks being left to other vehicles, such as four-wheeled wagons or the kind of two-wheeled carts that rumbled across northern Eurasia from the third millennium onward. Warriors certainly rode in chariots, their weapons in quivers and cases on the sides of the box. While the records confirm they sometimes were used on the battlefield, chariots were very expensive, and only a ruler or a nation with enormous resources could have afforded to deploy numbers of them in situations where a single wound to a horse could have incapacitated the whole vehicle. More likely the chariot was used for transporting valued warriors or leaders, or carrying messages, on the fringes of the battle rather than into the thick of the fray.

There is however another context in which chariots appeared during the Bronze Age, and that is the hunt. Hunting was, at least in the more settled areas, a sport of the wealthy and of the ruling class, and from Greece to China men who could afford luxury hunted with the aid of chariots. Pursuit of the larger types of game in such lightly-constructed vehicles must have been hazardous, and thus offered the stimulus of danger. It is even possible that the chariot evolved first as a means of following game over the rolling grassy plains of Eurasia. Skills useful in the hunt, especially archery,

Bow-shaped bronze fitting with turquoise inlay. Though regularly found in Shang chariot burials these fittings do not seem to have been connected with chariot or harness. The open mouths of the horsehead terminals contain small pellets that rattle if moved

were the same skills that were useful in warfare. The chariot almost always appeared in company with a collection of weapons that included the composite bow, itself an elaborate and therefore expensive construction of wood, horn and sinew. The same experience necessary for making chariots, and for selecting specific woods and other materials for use in various parts of the vehicle, was appropriate to the making of such bows, and may have influenced their development.

In recent years scholars have given scant attention to the matter of how chariots were operated. Such a subject necessarily is largely speculative, and is a realm where scholars hesitate to venture. The most prevalent current view is that chariots cannot have operated very well. This attitude is largely the result of activities earlier in this century of a retired French cavalry officer named des Noettes. He reconstructed what he thought was the harness of antiquity and then wrote very convincingly of how he had succeeded in choking the horses on whom he had tried it. His experiment, never since repeated it would seem (whether for reasons of charity or timidity), convinced several generations of writers that the early harness was woefully inefficient, throttling the horses at every step.

If we accept this view we must agree that, for more than a millennium, the elite of the ancient world were content to subject themselves to a situation in which the horses were so poorly harnessed they must have been on the point of rebellion at every turn. In the light of the design capabilities so amply demonstrated by refinements in every other part of the chariot, this seems not only very strange but totally unreasonable, and it would be rather easier to suppose that des Noettes failed to guess the nature of early harness correctly. A fresh look at the early pictorial evidence indicates his reconstruction was wrong, but it will undoubtedly take another experiment to disprove him, so firmly is his colourful theory implanted in the minds of a great many historians.

Assuming that the harness, like every other functional part of the early chariot, was as

Matched bronze caps for axle and yoke saddle. Fittings for a single Shang chariot, often decorated with dragon designs, usually formed a matched set

efficient as it needed to be, it is possible to speculate on the pleasures of chariot driving. Well-bred persons apparently did not ride horses at the time and chariots must have afforded one of the very few opportunities available during the Bronze Age to experience the thrill of speed. There is something about rapid movement, with the rush of wind on the face and the sense of compressing the realities of time and space, which can be incredibly exhilarating. Add to this pure sensation the additional pleasure, of a type to which the male of our species is particularly susceptible, of pitting physical strength and mental sharpness against a real challenge, and you have some idea of the appeal that endeared charioteering to the vigorous men of antiquity.

The driver, probably a well-dressed and certainly a well-conditioned member of a good family, had to know and trust his horses, who must have had to undergo lengthy training and long practice to accustom them to the stress of hard driving in hunt or war. He had to know their individual characteristics, and allow for

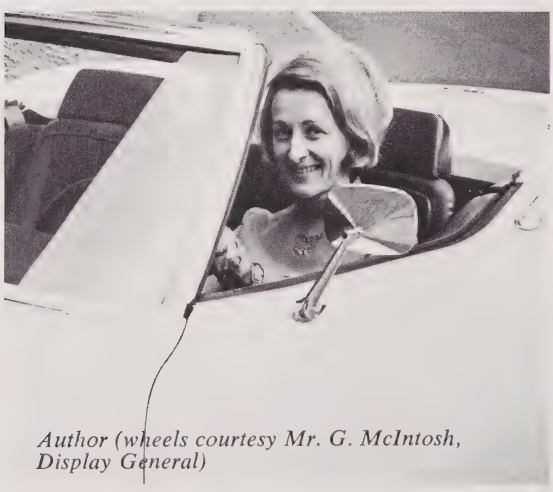
them in his driving. He had to choose a course along ways that must regularly have taken him over rough terrain where one jolt over a projecting rock could have split his axle. He had to interact with the wishes of his passenger, usually an archer, turning to allow him a good shot at the right moment, speeding to follow quarry or enemy.

When one considers the realities of manoeuvring at speed with an imbalance caused by the additional weight of a passenger, it becomes clear that a good passenger would have functioned to assist the running of the vehicle much as the crew of a sailboat assist a racing skipper. In a chariot this would mean redisposition of weight, hiking out to keep the inner wheel down on a turn, watching the slightest change in course to help with a quick movement to lift a wheel over an unexpected obstacle, even being ready to spring to safety if the vehicle were about to overturn.

These difficulties would have been compounded if more than one vehicle were engaged in any chase. At this thought anyone who has experienced the joys of racing a boat can almost hear the torrents of antique abuse being hurled from driver to driver, gentlemen or no.

The chariots of Shang China in particular must have been enormously exciting to drive, since their great wheels set on very long axles gave them a high centre of gravity that must have required a crouching posture at speed. Nor were they silent. Chariots were equipped with jingling fittings and ornaments of various kinds, as well as with a selection of small bells. The pounding hooves of the horses, accompanied by a good deal of creaking as wood, leather and bronze reacted, the jingling of the ornaments, and the cries of the human participants might well have struck terror into the hearts of onlookers. And, since Chinese chariots often had a yoke curling up and out at the ends like horns, decorated at the front by two round eye-like disks, they may have taken on an almost demoniacal animation at speed.

In early China, as in Mycenaean Greece, XVIIIth Dynasty Egypt, and Aryan India, chariots offered a form of excitement to the ruling class which we can only imagine today. While the thrills of charioteering are lost beyond the temporal frontier, the human element has provided a haunting link with Shang China. A famous oracle bone records a hunt during which a man believed to be a royal prince was apparently thrown from his chariot and killed. Even in antiquity, it seems, young blood and hot wheels did not always mix without tragedy.



Author (wheels courtesy Mr. G. McIntosh, Display General)

When Barbara Stephen joined the ROM in 1953 her interest tended toward Japanese material. But the overwhelming collection of unidentified bronzes in the Museum soon attracted her attention and enthusiasm. A UNESCO grant in 1962 allowed her to spend several months in Taiwan studying Chinese Bronze Age material. Through her detective work many objects now could be catalogued as chariot and horse fittings of the Shang period. Her husband's enthusiasm for car-racing helped give her a sense of the thrill experienced by the ancient charioteers. Mrs. Stephen made her third major trip abroad last year when she spent three months at the site of ancient Siraf on the Persian Gulf excavating early Chinese export ceramics.

Recent Publications

NEW GUINEA: BIG MAN ISLAND records a society in which a man may make a name for himself by prowess in head-hunting, in giving feasts and in trade with others. Designed to accompany and amplify the current exhibition of the ROM's New Guinea material, the book is the first comprehensive overview of the peoples of eastern New Guinea. 260 pages, with more than 130 illustrations and 24 colour photographs.

(NEW GUINEA: BIG MAN ISLAND by E. S. Rogers, Curator, ROM Department of Ethnology; hardbound, $9.95)

Members of the ROM Department of Mammalogy have recently published three studies of bats: R. L. Peterson and D. L. Harrison, in Life Sciences Occasional Paper 16, record the second and third known specimens of the African molossid bat, *Tadarida lobata,* while Occasional Paper 17 (R. L. Peterson and M. Brock Fenton) describes variation in the bats of the genus *Harpyionycteris* and a new species. M. Brock Fenton, Research Associate and Assistant Professor of Biology, Carleton University, Ottawa, is the author of a population study of *Myotis lucifugus*—the little brown bat—in Ontario.

(THE SECOND AND THIRD KNOWN SPECIMENS OF THE AFRICAN MOLOSSID BAT, TADARIDA LOBATA, ROM Life Sciences Occasional Paper 16, paperbound, 50¢; VARIATION IN THE BATS OF THE GENUS HARPYIONYCTERIS, WITH THE DESCRIPTION OF A NEW RACE: ROM Life Sciences Occasional Paper 17, paperbound, 75¢; POPULATION STUDIES OF MYOTIS LUCIFUGUS (CHIROPTERA: VESPERTILIONIDAE) IN ONTARIO, ROM Life Sciences Contribution 77, paperbound, $2.00)

Water-striders, those insects which seem to skate over the surface of pools and ponds, are fascinating to the budding entomologist. Now Lanna Cheng and C. H. Fernando have brought together data on the eleven known species of Ontario water-striders, with illustrated keys for identification.

(THE WATERSTRIDERS OF ONTARIO (HETEROPTERA: GERRIDAE), Life Sciences Miscellaneous Publication, paperbound, 75¢)

How did the Algonkians differ from the Iroquoians? Did the Indians of the plains use saddles? What is the significance of the totem pole? These are just a few of the topics discussed in the six handbooks on the Indians of Canada, with maps, photographs and drawings, which are now available. E. S. Rogers, Curator of the ROM Ethnology Department, has prepared the material, and a filmstrip to accompany each booklet may be obtained from the National Film Board of Canada.

(INDIANS OF CANADA: A SURVEY; INDIANS OF THE NORTH PACIFIC COAST; INDIANS OF THE PLAINS; ALGONKIANS OF THE EASTERN WOODLANDS; IROQUOIANS OF THE EASTERN WOODLANDS; INDIANS OF THE SUBARCTIC; ROM, paperbound, 50¢ each)

For star-gazers—two new booklets by H. C. King, Curator of the McLaughlin Planetarium. THE PLANET VENUS discusses man's developing knowledge of Venus—the morning and evening star—from Babylonian times to the Mariner V and Venera IV fly-bys in 1967. Venus, closer to the sun, is similar to the earth only in size and mass, and life in any form known to us is highly unlikely there, sci-fi to the contrary.

FROM HERE TO INFINITY traces man's impressions of the universe, from the bowl of stars over a flat earth, through Aristotle's and Copernicus' many crystal shells surrounding our planet, to the most recent controversy: is our galaxy part of a continuously expanding universe, or does the universe pulsate?

(THE PLANET VENUS, paperbound, 75¢; FROM HERE TO INFINITY, paperbound, 75¢)

FROGKIND AND MANKIND

Helmuth Fuchs,
Associate Curator, Department of Ethnology

Mankind generally has attempted to explain his world from two points of view. One is in terms of cause and effect—by analyzing, structuring and counting. The other approach explains everything by creating symbols, a unique ability of man. Much of an anthropologist's time is spent in one-way translation of phenomena and events from one value system into the other.

Frog representation from Mexico, in polished dark grey limestone

Frog motif decorates a bronze chariot fitting from Shang China, c. 1,300-1,028 B.C.

To illustrate: consider "Frogkind and Mankind." For this purpose we can dispense with zoological considerations. We are not even concerned whether in fact the animal is a frog or a toad. What interests us is the relationship and mystical significance between frogs and man in our common universe, and the symbolism that has been ascribed to this interrelationship.

No one can refute that frogs and toads are more active in wet weather. When rain is imminent, while it is raining, and just after a rainfall, these creatures are to be found all over the country. A vital connection seems to exist between rain and frogs and toads. But there also appear to be phenomena which come about as a consequence of rain. "Once it starts raining," a South American Indian told me years ago, "the desert gets green, the animals start pairing, and even mankind can't escape the powerful call of nature."

A new idea has been added to the concept association, frog-rain. It is the idea of fertility; not a specific fertility, but one that embraces plants, animals, and mankind: the universal integrity of life.

The concept is universal and so are its symbols, in time as well as in space. We find frog representations on archaeological remains almost all over the world, and there are similar stories from many cultures about the frog's (toad's) relation to fertility.

On the American continent alone, the examples are legion. Archaeological frog or toad portraits in stone and gold are frequent in the whole circum-Caribbean area. Made of stone, bone or jade they are abundant in many sites of what is today Central America, the Caribbean Islands, Colombia, Venezuela, Surinam and Brazil. Examples in metal have been excavated at sites in Central America, Colombia and Ecuador. On pottery remains, frog and toad representations are even more frequent; as far south in the continent as from the Diaguita-Calchaqui area in the Argentinian North West, on Moche and Nasca vessels from Peru, on Chibcha ceramics from Colombia, from Santarém in the Amazon Valley in Brazil. There is a frog in the Maya hieroglyph for *O-uinal* (20-day period of the Maya calendar), and frog representations appear on totem poles and

The frog as tutelary spirit;
Haida miniature totem pole
carved in argillite

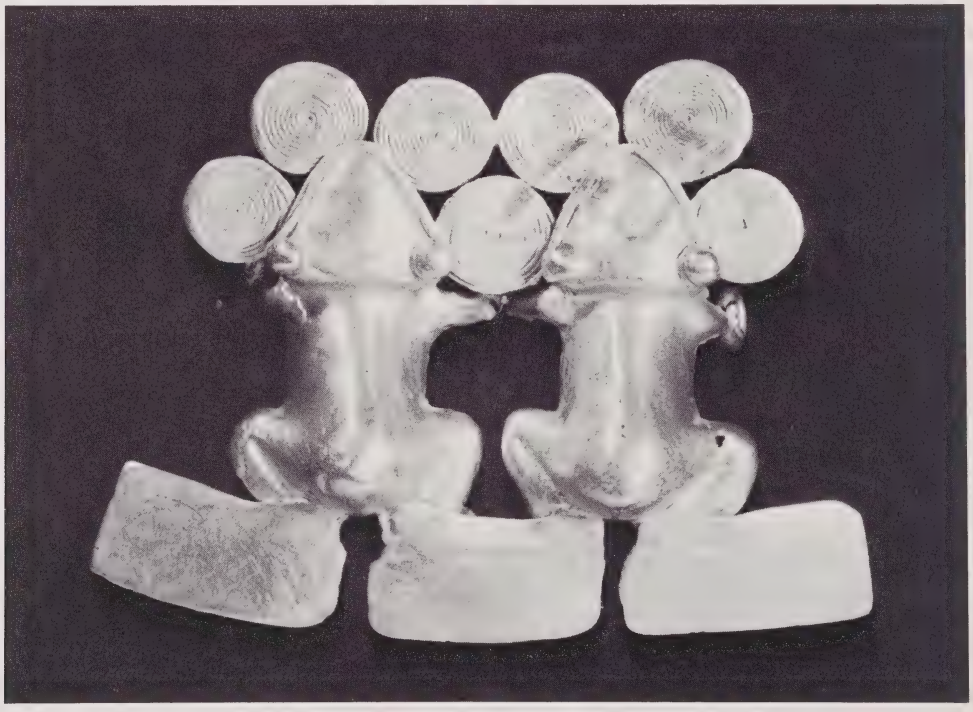
masks among the Indians of the North West Coast in British Columbia.

Documentary literature exists regarding oral traditions from many tribes among America's aborigines, among them the Araukanians in Chile, the Aymara and Chipaya in Peru and Bolivia, the Kogi in Colombia, many Carib tribes in the Caribbean area, Venezuela and Brazil, the Warrau of the Orinoco Delta, the Arawak on the South American mainland and the Caribbean islands, the Maya of British Honduras, the Aztecs, the Cora of the Mexican Pacific Coast, the Pima, Havasupai, Hopi and others in the American Southwest. There are examples also among the Northern Shoshoni, Southern Ute, Luiseño, Maidu, and as far north as the Nez-Percé, Coeur d'Alenes and Klamath in southwestern Oregon.

Now, consider our own cultural heritage. Remember the story of the Frog Prince, where the age-old frog-fertility relation is timidly hidden in a harmless fairy tale? However, the

Frog representations were among grave amulets in Egyptian burials of the 7th to 4th centuries B.C.

Double frog pendant in gold, from Panama. The Cleveland Museum of Art, in memory of Mr. and Mrs. Henry Humphreys, gift of the daughter, Helen



practice of hanging votive toads made of iron or wax in the chapel dedicated to Saint Leonhard, the saint of fertility, in Alsace, Upper Bavaria, Tyrol and Carinthia, is certainly not a hidden manifestation. Peering through the gate between mystical beliefs and scientific thinking, we should mention the midwife frog, *Alytes obstetricans*, as a witness of how a whole worldview was reduced to a zoological species.

In the above-mentioned areas of Europe and elsewhere, a symbolic relation between the frog or toad and the uterus and female genitals is established, ideas also promulgated by the ancient Greek fathers of modern science, like Aristoteles and Hippocrates. The Mayas of Central America used the same word "mutš" to designate the frog as well as the female sex organs. But I shall not dwell on the most complex of mankind's symbolisms: language.

Abundance of Life, embracing plants, animals, and mankind, is of great importance in a hunting and gathering economy, which mankind practised exclusively during 90 per cent of its existence. Among the Aruak in South America it is believed that a frog disguised as man taught the first Indians the art of hunting. The Carib Indians believe that a frog brings luck to hitherto unsuccessful hunters. A frog gave a Warrau Indian an arrow which never failed. A mystic frog helps Uitoto Indian hunters to find their prey. The Bororo Indians in Brazil, before they leave on a hunt, imitate the frog's croaking in a ceremony and paint their bodies in the frog's colours. The Kashinawa Indians of South America use a vaccination of frog-exudates to be more successful in hunting. No doubt, the use of frog poison in hunting means much more than a chemical reaction to kill the prey; it is also a manifestation of the mystic relationship between Abundance of Life and Hunting.

The concept of frog (toad) in the moon, or generally connected to astral bodies, is not in-

Tsimshian (Gitskan) clappers portray a universe in which, whether the frog spits out or swallows man, whether man gives birth to or copulates with the frog, Frogkind and Mankind intermingle

Woven slipper case representing a frog; Bella Coola Indians, Northwest Coast

frequent in both Old and New Worlds. Several Indian tribes attribute a solar eclipse to the swallowing of the sun by a frog or toad. Among the Cuna Indians of Panama, selected albinos (who make up 7% of the tribal population) shoot miniature arrows at the sun in eclipse to frighten off the threatening animal. Similar ideas are present among the Cherokee and Crees in North America.

The idea that a toad or frog swallows the sun leads to the belief that these animals are keepers of the original fire, an idea well documented all over the American continent, from the Gran Chaco in South America to the Haida Indians on the North West Coast. The Makiritare Indians of the Upper Orinco (Venezuela) tell the following story of how fire was obtained for mankind:

The stepmother of the Makiritare culture-hero twins, a toad named Kauwau, had the fire hidden somewhere in her body. Tricking her, the twins discovered that she kept the fire in her throat. So they decided to kill her, and shook her violently until she spat the fire out.

Such a chain of concepts about the frog—Rain, Fertility, Abundance, Astral bodies, and Fire—are part of understanding the mystical and vital contexts. All these concepts are in an ambivalent relationship with the concept of Death. Solar eclipses caused by a threatening amphibian first indicate that antithesis. A frog's croaking foreshadows death among the Kogi Indians of Colombia. Among the Cuna Indians of Panama, a frog could be fatal to a baby. Similar ideas are found among the Indians of Peru, the Guaraní in Paraguay and the Cherokee in North America.

Finally we should mention the frog as totemic animal. In these cases a mythical relationship is claimed between a group of people and a certain plant or animals, in this case the frog. This situation is documented for the Wapishana in Guiana and the Haida and Tlingit on the North West Coast. It can be assumed that in these cases the close relationship between Frog-kind and Mankind had thrived to a point where the concept of the frog as ancestor or tutelary spirit became feasible.

In this short article it is impossible to describe in detail a universe of conceptions and to show the complexity of ideas based on symbolic rather than logical relations.

"You know," a Cree Indian of James Bay told me recently while we were discussing such universal questions, "the white man never will understand us."

Indeed, one doubts whether our analytical systems, no older than a few centuries, are adequate to penetrate what mankind's ability of comprehension had created during the length of human existence.

Helmuth Fuchs spent three months this summer among the Guajiro Indians of Colombia and Venezuela, continuing his association and studies which began while he was Chief of the Department of Ethnology and Archaeology at the Museo de Ciencias Naturales in Caracas. He also is preparing a monograph on the Guajiro. Since he joined the ROM in 1967, he has spent time among the Cree Indians of Fort Albany, Ontario.

THE RED RIVER ARTIST
Peter Rindisbacher / 1806-1834

Mary Allodi
Research Assistant, Canadiana Department

Scene in an Indian Tent.
Collection:
West Point Museum

Indian
Hunter Killing Bison.
Collection:
Hudson's Bay
Company

Twenty-five years before the famous pioneer-artists Henry Warre and Paul Kane travelled to Canada's prairies, a 15-year-old Swiss boy immigrated to the Red River Settlement. The year was 1821 and the area, later to become Winnipeg, was still a fur-trader's outpost. Peace, if not plenty, had finally come to this strife-torn settlement with the absorption of the North West Company by its powerful fur trading rival, the Hudson's Bay Company. The young immigrant, Peter Rindisbacher, had arrived early enough to observe the Plains Indians—Cree, Chippewa, Assiniboine and Sioux—before their way of life was obliterated by white settlers.

Peter had received some instruction in painting before leaving Switzerland and he brought his pencils, pen and watercolour box with him. Inspired by the frontier subjects—the Indians, the Metis, the fur-traders, the great buffalo hunts on the plains and the hardships endured by the white settlers—he painted a remarkably accurate record of what he saw, and left the earliest pictorial chronicle of life in mid-western Canada.

Young Rindisbacher's views were not only precise, they were also strikingly beautiful. These small, glowing watercolours were bought by British officers and Hudson's Bay Company men for a few shillings each. One of

these officials even went so far as to have his watercolours copied in England and printed as lithographs—but they were only identified as "taken by a gentleman on the spot." The artist's isolation on the frontier, and his early death at the age of 28, helped in obscuring his deserved fame. Only recently has he been 'rediscovered.' Last year, in a Toronto Sotheby sale, one of his watercolours fetched $17,000.

The 70 watercolours and drawings in the Rindisbacher exhibition showing in the Sigmund Samuel Canadiana Building (September 18 to October 25) were called together from 15 different museums and private collections. This visual document is supplemented by Alvin M. Josephy's book *The Artist was a Young Man*, which gives a detailed account of Rindisbacher's life and work.

Taking his works chronologically in the exhibition, we can follow the young artist from Switzerland to Saint Louis, re-living his adventures as he tells them. We see the Swiss colonists embarking on the little transport ship at Dordrecht in May of 1821, weathering the gales and icebergs of the North Atlantic and later strolling on the ice floes off Labrador. Here Peter sketched portraits and figure studies of Eskimos, just as, on their arrival at York Factory in Hudson's Bay, he painted his first pictures of Cree Indians. He then tells of the

Labrador Eskimo in his canoe, drawn from nature.
Collection: Public Archives of Canada

Prairie Wolf. Collection: State Historical Society of Wisconsin

Captain W. Andrew Bulger Saying Farewell at Fort Mackay (detail). Collection: Amon Carter Museum of Western Art

"extremely wearisome journey" down river to Norway House on Lake Winnipeg, including in his visual diary the portages, shipwrecks and halts on the way. On their arrival at the mouth of the Red River, he records that their voyage had taken them five months and 4,836 English miles of sea voyage.

The Swiss colonists were to meet with their full share of difficulties. Many of them thought that their destination was the Red River of Louisiana. Instead they found themselves hundreds of miles to the north, facing an inhospitable climate, uncultivated land, little food and no houses. When spring finally came, many of the settlers left for the south, but the Rindisbachers remained for five more years, during which time Peter supplemented his family's income by selling his sketches and working at the Hudson's Bay depot. The flood of 1826 finally decided them to move to a settlement on the Fever River on the Illinois-Wisconsin boundary. The artist continued painting frontier subjects until his death in 1834 in Saint Louis, Missouri.

As an artist, Peter Rindisbacher was an isolated phenomenon on the frontier scene. Although his roots can be traced to the Swiss 18th century costume and genre prints, his New World subject matter was a 'first,' even in America. The frontier shaped his vision and earned him his fame. In Europe he would have remained an unknown and derivative painter. The generation of famous painters of Indians which was to follow him westwards did not reach Saint Louis until two or three years before his death. They arrived too late to influence his work, which remained isolated and personal.

Rindisbacher was a miniature painter at heart. He renders each object in precise pen-and-ink outline before filling in with pure and brilliant tones of watercolour. His Indian costumes are painted bead by bead, feather by feather. The animals have each hair painted in brush point. The early portraits are masks of outlined precision. The development of his style towards a more expressive interpretation of frontier life happened gradually. His move to the more settled American mid-west, and especially his final settling in Saint Louis, then the gateway to the American west, exposed him to influences which had not reached the isolated Red River settlement. He gradually eliminated the hard outline and refined his brush stroke even further to convey bulk and dimension. The muscled figures of the Indians are no longer flat maps of ligaments; they swell and glisten with light and

shade. In his latest works he also added movement and emotion to the scenes which originally had been moments frozen for posterity. The dream-like quality of life on the banks of the Assiniboine was replaced by the drama and violence of the American thrust westwards.

Rindisbacher is an artist who satisfies most palates. He has narrative for the historian, detail for the ethnologist, style for the art lover. His point of view as an agricultural settler forms a telling contrast to that of the gentleman-officer passing through Canada on tour of duty. At a time when most Canadian views were military-style topographical sketches, with figures added only for scale, Rindisbacher's Indians, Metis and fur-traders dominate his paintings and add the human element to the historical scene.

Collecting art on an historical basis is often a frustrating tug-of-war between quality and content. The earliest pictures of a frontier are usually the work of amateur artists with more enthusiasm than talent. Their sketches lend dimension to Canadian history and are collected for the information they contain rather than for their intrinsic beauty. But once in a long while artistic quality and historical content are united in the work of a pioneer artist. Peter Rindisbacher is such an artist. His native talent and intensity of vision show us a frontier as no one will again see it.

War Party at Fort Douglas discharging their guns in the air as a token of their peaceful intentions. Watercolour, pen and ink. Collection: Royal Ontario Museum

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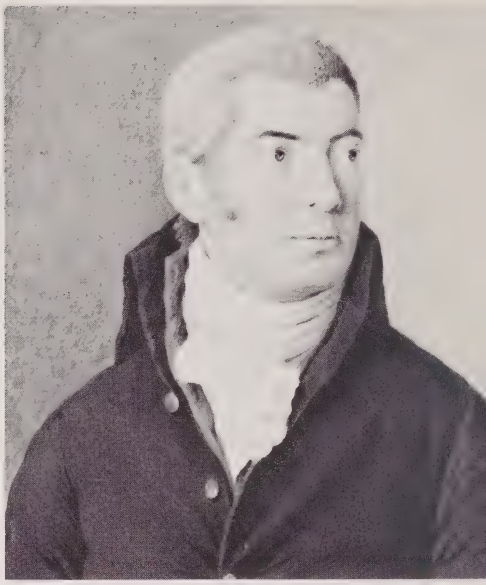
Mary Allodi, the charming sleuth who surprised Canadiana collectors with her discovery of 52 sketches by Coke Smyth but signed "W. H. Bartlett" (ROTUNDA, Vol. 1, No. 3, 1968) has had a busy 1970. She was responsible for the exhibition of paintings by Peter Rindisbacher at the Sigmund Samuel Canadiana Building which closed October 25. Mrs. Allodi also helped organize the exhibition, *Paintings in Early Canada,* which showed the cream of the Canadiana collection to summer visitors. She has recently completed a catalogue *raisonné* of the 1800 watercolours and drawings in the Museum's collection which is scheduled for publication next year.

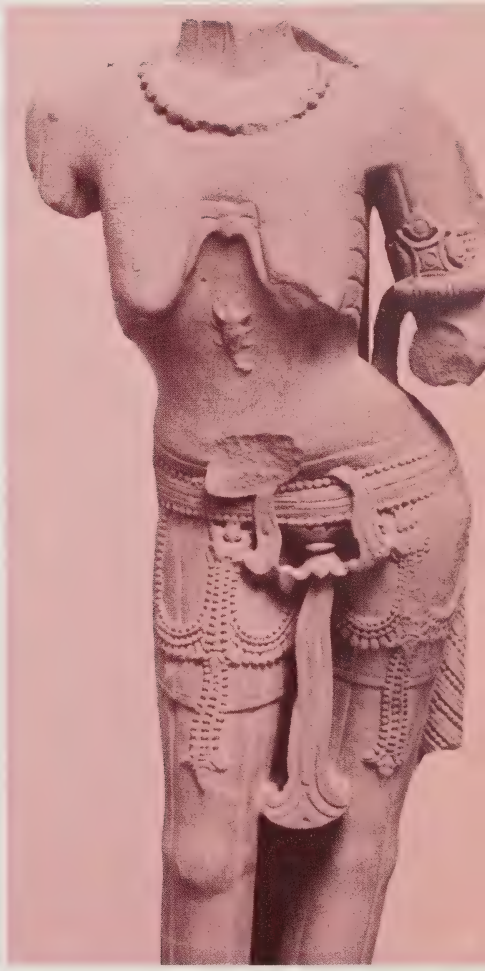
The Growing Collections

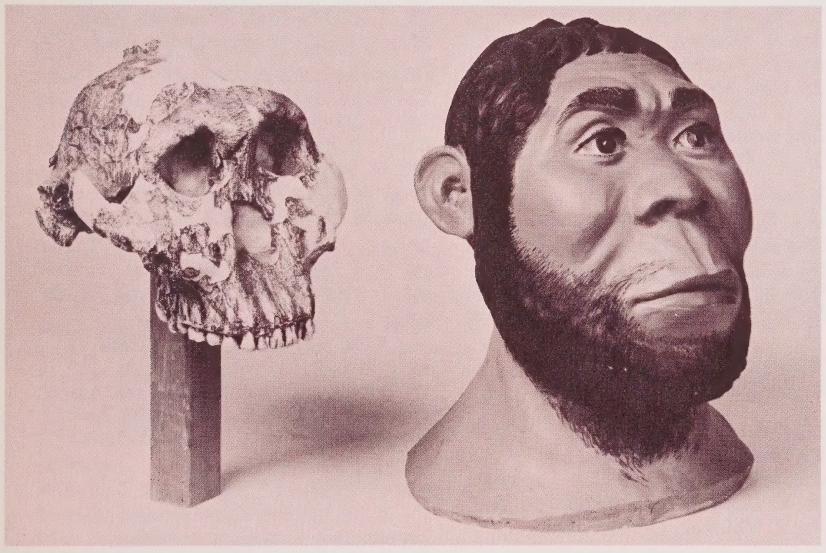
With the aid of the Purchase Trust Fund, the Textiles Department has acquired from a private collection in England, a handsome brocaded robe used by an actor in a female role in a Japanese Noh play. To offset the impassive masks, highly-stylized gestures and sparse stage settings of a classic Noh drama, the costumes are brilliantly coloured and beautifully patterned. This particular example although dating from the middle of the 18th century harks back to those of an earlier period by reason of its densely patterned band which, in itself, is rare. It is a *kara-ori,* of a type that would have been worn slipped off the shoulders, and held at the waist by a sash. It is an important addition to the ROM collection which contains only four other Noh robes, all of which represent other costume types.



The Canadiana Department has recently acquired two watercolour portraits by William Berczy, the first professional artist to settle in Upper Canada. They are of Alexander McDonell, legislative councillor of Upper Canada from 1800 to 1842; and of Robert Isaac Dey Gray, solicitor general from 1794 until his untimely death in a sailing accident in 1804. Both were painted about 1803 in York (Toronto).

Two sculptures purchased by the Far Eastern Department are now on display in the Indian Gallery. The earlier 9th century rare four-faced Shiva linga (phallic symbol) from Benares, is executed in grey limestone. Each facet represents one aspect of the deity, as well as one of the cardinal points and elements (fire, air, water and earth). The phallus itself symbolizes that aspect of Shiva which is unknowable yet felt. The 11th century red sandstone figure from Rajasthan is an unusual form of the Mother Goddess Camunda. As a demon slayer, she is usually given an evil appearance with withered sagging breasts and a scorpion on her abdomen. Here, however, the upper body is contrasted with a firm and shapely lower portion.





For the new Hall of the Evolution of Man section in the renovated Vertebrate Palaeontology Gallery, the department has acquired two skulls of "near-men." The larger skull is of a vegetarian, but the species died out about half a million years ago leaving no descendants. The Leakeys discovered this skull in Oldovai Gorge and it is the famous *Zinjanthropus*, later identified as a specimen of *Paranthropus*. Living at the same time as *Zinjanthropus* but evolving to present-day man is *Australopithecus*, largely a carnivore. The specimen shown here from South Africa is believed to be a female and is affectionately called "Mrs. Ples," since its original scientific name was *Plesianthropus*. Royal Ontario Museum artist Sylvia Hahn modelled the muscles and skin onto the actual skulls to restore the facial features. In the new section electronic controls will cross-fade the skulls and reconstruction of each species so that the flesh will appear to grow on the bones.

"New-born" lava (produced during the May-June 1970 eruption of Mt. Hekla) was recently collected by the Curator of the Geology Department while on vacation in Iceland. This eruption was the 15th in the area since the year 1104 A.D. Dr. Tovell also collected specimens of lava flows, none of which are older than 6,000 years.

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